



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900  
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF  
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

April 2, 2012

Rick Brazell, Forest Supervisor:  
Nez Perce National Forest  
104 Airport Road  
Grangeville, Idaho 83530

Re: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) comments for the Nez Perce National Forest (Forest) Little Slate Project (Project) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). (EPA Project Number: 07-028-AFS).

Dear Mr. Brazell:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Little Slate Project on the Salmon River Ranger District of the Nez Perce National in Idaho County, Idaho. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Clean Air Act § 309 require the EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts associated with all major federal actions.

In our comments on the draft EIS in September 2011, the EPA expressed environmental concerns related to the extent of temporary road construction and reconstruction proposed under Alternative B. Because Alternative C emphasized a reduction in road construction, we encouraged the Forest to incorporate elements of Alternative C into the final preferred alternative. We are pleased to note that the final preferred alternative has been modified to include 5.4 miles of road decommissioning in Upper Slate Creek and Rubie Creek. We believe that these activities, in conjunction with the other watershed improvement activities incorporated into Alternative B will result in an improving trend in aquatic condition.

We also encouraged the Forest to expand upon the discussion of monitoring in the FEIS. Our intention with this recommendation was to ensure that the Forest remains in a position to identify and pursue adaptive management measures as appropriate. We also sought to ensure compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality's recent Final Guidance on the Appropriate Use of Mitigation and Monitoring.<sup>1</sup> We are satisfied that section 2.5 in the FEIS outlines the key components of an effective monitoring program. We continue to encourage the Forest; however, to use the EIS process to provide detail about project level monitoring that will be pursued in order to ensure the implementation and success of proposed mitigation and project design measures. This discussion should include areas to be monitored, core attributes to be monitored, and where appropriate, monitoring objectives, elements, types, methods/parameters, frequency/duration, and projected cost.

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/current\\_developments/docs/Mitigation\\_and\\_Monitoring\\_Guidance\\_14Jan2011.pdf](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/current_developments/docs/Mitigation_and_Monitoring_Guidance_14Jan2011.pdf)

Again, we appreciate the effort taken by the Forest Service to address our concerns, and we continue to support the goals and objectives of the Little Slate Project. If you have questions or you would like to discuss the above comments, please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by email at [reichgott.christine@epa.gov](mailto:reichgott.christine@epa.gov), or you may contact Teresa Kubo of my staff at (503) 326-2859 or by email at [kubo.teresa@epa.gov](mailto:kubo.teresa@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine B. Reichgott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a double hash mark at the end.

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager  
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit

